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OCTOBER 17, 2025 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 22

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Creating more safe spaces for survivors. **page 4**

MEET YOUR VENDOR: **SHAWN SWOFFER** PAGE 3

GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Megan Morse accepts award from the Fair Housing Center Board of Directors at their Oct. 16 annual breakfast.

In a first-of-its-kind lawsuit, landlord agrees to accept tenants with housing vouchers. page 8

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM venmo

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network of Street Papers

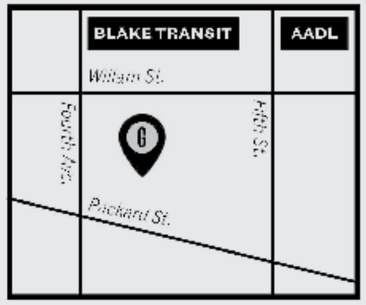
NOW HIRING: GROUNDCOVER NEWS VENDORS!

Why?

- *Make money on your first day*
- *Choose your own schedule*
- *Work for yourself*
- *Join a supportive community*
- *Get started this week for FREE*

Groundcover New Vendor Orientations are EVERY Tuesday and Thursday at 10am at the Groundcover Office.

Trainings take 90 minutes.
New vendors receive 10 free papers and a badge to start.



The Groundcover office is located in the basement of Bethlehem United Church of Christ (423 S 4th Ave, downtown Ann Arbor)

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WAYS TO SUPPORT

1. **Buy the paper, read the paper.**
2. **Get the word out** — We rely on grassroots marketing. Talk to people about Groundcover and share us with your network.
3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropiate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES

Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)
1/8	$110.00	$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$650.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

PACKAGE PRICING

Three Months/Six Issues: **15%** off
Six Months/Twelve Issues: **25%** off
Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: **35%** off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

Shawn Swoffer, vendor No. 574

In one sentence, who are you? Crazy.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover? Kerrytown (everywhere!) and the corner of Main and Liberty.

Why did you start selling Groundcover? I was getting calls to the police for panhandling; selling Groundcover is legal.

What words do you live by? Be your best, have fun, give everything your all.

If you could do anything for a day, what would it be? Skydiving.

If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be? Seafood.

What is something about you that someone on the street wouldn't know? I love metal music.

What do you wish you knew more about? Creatures of the sea and psychology.

What's a small thing that makes your day better? Being with who I love.

What was your first job? Maid.

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County? Better bus transportation for myself — it needs another stop for me to catch.

What's your pet peeve? Bad parenting.

What's your superpower? I'm determined.

What are your hobbies? Art and music.

Undercover art intel: Twisted Things Boutique

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

Twisted Things Boutique is a wonderful curiosity shop. This amazing art and fun shop has 130 local artists showing their talents from painting to jewelry to mixed media. The store is on 40 North Huron St. in Ypsilanti and was the first of its kind in this area.

The store opened October 13, 2016. Twisted Things features many amazing artworks made from nature and found objects, as well as organic, recycled objects. Much of the artwork from the great outdoors are butterfly wings, bones, deer antlers and animal skulls. There are carvings and ceramics as well as paintings and leather works.

There is Native American artwork such as dream catchers and medicine bags with single chokers and baby moccasins with paintings.

There is a huge apothecary with every plant one needs for tinctures, incense burning or an herbal bath. The apothecary has many herbs and traditional earth medicines as well as spices, berries and floral essences. They have herbs such as mugwort, mullen, sage and devil's claw.

There is an artist that only works in animal parts and has bone artworks with taxidermy animal images and deer antlers. My favorite is the baby chicks; they look so cute and fun. There are snake parts and many kinds of bones sold individually.

There is a huge sticker section full of many popular images such as rainbows and figures, fairies and animals — fun fun fun.

Each artist has a designated area for their artwork, but they can also display pieces scattered throughout the shop.

Twisted Things is also a shop for activities such as art classes, herbal round table and homesteading informative classes and the ever-popular prepping classes including canning.

The shop is unique in that Morgana Grimm is not only the owner, but one of the artists as well. She manages the store, and all the works of art support the store as well as the artists themselves.

Morgana told me, "I'm just like you. I manage the store only — I take no profit other than selling my own artwork. I want to see you all succeed. All the money goes back into keeping the doors open."

I was absolutely amazed by this statement. This is truly an artist collective shop run by one amazing woman. She has won several awards from the Current Magazine and the Marquis Who's Who in America Publications Board for 2023-2024.

Twisted Things has amazing jewelry made of bones, feather and bugs as well as bat wings and beads.

Halloween is present throughout the store in different ways such as popular scary movie characters (think Chuckie, Jason), paintings, earrings and clothes.

There is a huge candle area of animals and rainbow colors.

There are many esoteric supplies such as leather books, wonderful wands and peacock feathers and useful hand-carved knives.

There is a gothic teen clothing section as well with a fun black skirt and wild tees for every age. If you love Japan as I do, there are kimonos with floral images woven in.

There are also common house plants and kitchen items as well as fresh eggs from Morgana's own farm. My personal favorite is the painting on the walls throughout the shop and on the shelves.

Artists from across Washtenaw show off their best fun works on a variety of images from mixed media to prints and acrylics; much of the work reflects the store decor.

So, come bring the family and experience something new and fun for all!

Groundcover Vendor Code

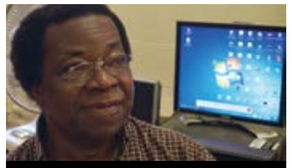
While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code or leave positive review of a Vendor experience please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Creating more safe spaces for victims and survivors



WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

October is domestic violence awareness month. This pervasive issue has been a major topic of local and national discussion for a very long time. As our nation makes some progress on women's rights and the protection of women's dignity, it has been very important that we raise our level of awareness to the magnitude of violence and abuse against women and domestic partners, and the legal and public policy means of ensuring safe spaces for victims.

Defining domestic violence

We have looked at several definitions of domestic violence. However, Henry Ford College in Dearborn, provides us with the most concise and clear definition of domestic violence.

"Also known as domestic abuse, relationship abuse, or intimate partner violence, domestic violence is committed by at least one of the people in an intimate relationship against the other. In a broader sense, the term can also refer to violence against one's immediate family members, such as children, siblings or parents.

"Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that negatively influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame or injure a person in order to maintain power and control over them. Domestic violence also includes behaviors that prevent a partner from doing what they want or force them to behave in ways they do not want.

"One of the most important factors in domestic violence is the belief that abuse, regardless of its form, is acceptable. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. It can happen to anyone at any point in a relationship. It affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Incidents are rarely isolated and often escalate in frequency and severity. The violence may culminate in serious injury, hospitalization or death."

Southeast Michigan experiences

Is domestic violence rising or declining in our communities? On Sept. 9, 2025, Channel 4 News of Detroit reported a newsworthy headline which read, "Domestic violence cases rising — Three Metro Detroit women shot, killed at the end of August." The station continued, "It's estimated that one in four people in the United States has experienced domestic abuse." The report looked at four troubling cases and what can be done to keep people safe.The cases include:

- Latricia Green Brown was shot and killed at Henry Ford Hospital where she worked. Her ex-husband was arrested.
- A mother and her baby were shot and killed in their car in Pontiac. Her boyfriend was arrested, but released on a low bond.
- Briana Frames was shot and killed in front of family members, including her 10-month-old baby. Her ex turned the gun on himself.
- Sarah Carroll was shot and killed in her apartment. Her ex-boyfriend, who had been accused of stalking, turned the gun on himself.

Channel 4 also reported that "while domestic violence is underreported, it still makes up two-thirds of police calls." Local 4's Crime and Safety expert Darnell Blackburn is quoted saying, "It's one of the most dangerous things for a police officer to encounter a domestic violence call, because it can turn on a dime."

The good news is that overall, crimes — including domestic violence crimes — are declining in Washtenaw County. However, there is still the challenge of underreported crimes due to the stigma and severity of trauma associated with domestic violence and abuse. Many survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault believe that the issues are still of paramount importance in their community. They need more safe places. They need more police and protection. They need more community support.

Safehouse to the rescue

Safehouse Center was established in Washtenaw County in 1978. Wash-tenaw County voters in 1992 approved a millage which would finance a new accessible and secure building.

Christine Watson is the Executive Director of Safehouse Center of Washtenaw County. Her tenure started in 2022; she previously worked as a legal advocate. She also supervised the response team and the legal advocacy program since 2006. She is the right leader for the Safehouse community organization. She works with a team of dedicated staff and volunteers.

On May 22, 2023, Christine Watson appeared on WEMU radio with David Fair. The interview was informative. In his last question to Christine Watson during the show, David Fair asked, "So obviously, with all of the challenges that lay before you, there are some real immediate concerns. What do you hope to address over the coming year to be of even greater service?"

Christine Watson responded, "Well, we're going to continue moving forward. We're going to continue moving forward in ways in which we can listen to our community, try to get our staffing stabilized, make sure that we're able to at least try to meet the demands that we're seeing. Last month, we received in excess of 200 requests for shelter. Even if we are fully staffed and able to open up all of our rooms, that is a demand that we're not going to be able to meet on our own. So, I think, again, this is where there has to be a coordinated community response, not just to survivors, but to our community in general. We have to work together to figure out the best way. In which to support the needs that we see on a daily basis. That's going to continue to be our focus."

The Washtenaw Country District Court has provided one Assistant District Attorney and one Legal Advocate for domestic violence to the Safehouse Center.

Christine Watson, Executive Director of Safehouse Center

Participate in Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2025

Domestic Violence Awareness Month is a time to educate communities about the signs of domestic and dating violence, support survivors and prevent violence. In 1981, the first "Day of Unity" was held in October by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence to connect those working to end violence against women and their children. The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was officially observed in 1987. Two years later, Congress officially designated October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month in 1989.

Awareness campaigns emphasize that domestic violence includes more than just physical abuse and can involve emotional, verbal and psychological abuse, as well as stalking.

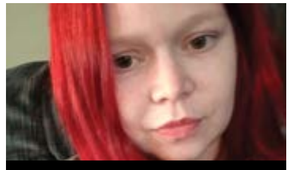
How to participate and raise awareness:

- Wear purple: Purple is the nationally recognized color for DVAM. On specific days, like #PurpleThursday, people wear purple to show support and raise awareness. Many also participate by displaying purple lights at their homes or businesses during the month.
- Share online: Use social media to share posts and videos using hashtags like #DomesticViolenceAwareness or #DVAM2025.
- Participate in events: Many universities and local organizations host events like "Turn the Campus Purple," clothesline projects, and educational panels.
- Support organizations: Donate to or volunteer with local and national organizations that support survivors.
- Learn and share: Educate yourself and others about the signs of abuse and the resources available for those in need.

On October 3, Groundcover News published an article with the title, "Ways that domestic and other abuses can impact you." The writer, D.A., talked about her personal experience. Many people within the homeless community can relate to that. Some

see **DOMESTIC** next page ➡

Remembering my sister, Crystal Marie Ludwig



TABITHA ALMOND
Groundcover vendor No. 360

I don't really know how to start and this is hard for me to write. So first let me say R.I.P. sissy — you will forever be missed but never forgotten, I promise you that.

Crystal lived a very hard life. From the day she was born she was fighting for her life because our mom had her over three months early. She was so little she had to wear baby doll clothes. Then, at the age of two-and-a-half, she became a big sister to me.

When she was just five years old she was already raising me due to our parents' drug and alcohol addictions. One day she almost burnt down the house (at the age of five) because she was trying to cook for me.

I was crying because I was hungry and she couldn't get nobody up to feed me, so she decided to do it herself. It was me and my sister against the world from that day forward. She was the one I always looked up to, and as long as she was around I always knew I would be taken care of and safe. No matter what happened in life I always had my sister.

When we became a little older and she started hanging out with her friends, I would tag along with her. Even though she didn't always want her little sister there, she would always give in and end up letting me go with her.

I always went everywhere with her, so when she would move in with our mom I was right there with her, moving in also. And when she would go back to our grandma's house, I was once again with her. I always knew that I was safe if I was with my sister because she would never ever let anything happen to me. I grew up my whole life being known as, "Oh, you're Crystal's sister."

Yes, we was sisters and we did act like sisters, so we didn't always get along. We did have our fights and arguments and, yes, we did do messed-up stuff to each other, but at the end of the day she was my blood and my big sister.

She was way more to me than just my sister. She was — and still is — my best friend, my mom, my protector, my heart and so much more to me.

Crystal was an amazing woman. She was a sister, a daughter, a granddaughter, a niece, a friend, a fiancée, and most importantly she was a mother to five beautiful children who she loved more than anything.

The hardest thing that I have ever had to do is say goodbye to my sister. I never would have thought in a million years that I would have to go through something like this at such a young age. We was supposed to get through all this together and fight this demon together.

When I say me and my sister did everything together, I mean we did everything together. I mean we even did jail time together. We also had our first child in the same year. She had her daughter in the beginning of the year and I had my son at the end of the year, but they was still born in the same year.

When I came out to the street life back in 2016, my sister was in jail and my dad told her what I was doing. She wrote me a letter begging me to stop and not go down that path, but I didn't listen to her. All I did was cry and then fold it up and put it in the backseat of my car.

Not too long after that I ended up getting into a relationship with — come to find out — one of my sister's exes. But I went to go and visit her and told her who I was with and gave her a phone number so she could get a hold of me.

When she got out of jail, instead of staying on the road to recovery she came back to the streets to protect me. She said that she wouldn't be able to live with herself knowing that I was in the streets without her. So, she came back out here and made it known to everyone that crossed our path that I was her sister and if they messed with me then they had to deal with her.

Me and Crystal have been through a lot together, from childhood to adulthood. We have had our ups and downs, but I can say that no matter what, when I needed her she was always there. All I had to do was say, sissy I need you, and she was there.

I also want to make it very clear to everyone that she was clean. There was NO DRUGS found in her system when she was killed. I know how hard it was for her but she was fighting every day.

I will never forget the last day that I seen her. She was fighting so hard to stay clean and it makes me feel so good to know that she pushed through the cravings she was having that day. I am very proud of my sister. That's the reason why I'm going to continue my fight on the road of recovery: to make her proud of me the way I am proud of her. My sister is the strongest woman I will ever know.

Life is going to be hard without her, I already know that, but I also know that she wouldn't want me to ever give up. She would want me to move forward and keep fighting so that's what I am going to do.

Originally published in Groundcover News August 2018.

Crystal Ludwig (above) cared for and protected her sister Tabitha until passing away.

➡ **DOMESTIC** from last page

people who live in temporary, transitional houses have experienced repeated acts of violence and abuse. The violence and abuse, in addition to the hostility and aggressiveness, beg for a legal and community intervention.

This writer has learned a lot about domestic violence and abuse from survivors. They have educated me about topics such as the Violence Against Women Act, mental cruelty, the battered women syndrome and many other issues including sexual assault awareness. It should be noted that April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. It is incumbent on all of us to be involved in programs for all events which attempt to prevent and end domestic violence and abuse.

SAFEHOUSE CENTER
CALL OUR 24/7 HELPLINE TO REACH OUR TEAM 734-995-5444

Happyscopes for the holidays

FELICIA WILBERT
Groundcover vendor No. 234

Hi readers, hope you enjoy your Happyscope!

Libra: *Sept 23-Oct 23* Decorating for the holidays is not a debate! Let go and show your skills. It's ok. Balance career and personal time to allow for the joy and money to flow.

Scorpio: *Oct 24-Nov 21* Let's take time to relax and allow that passionate side to emerge. Decorate this year with others, designing lots of joy and peace.

Sagittarius: *Nov 22-Dec 21* Yes, it's adventure time. The holidays will propel you into joy and peace. Pick vibrant colors this season that ring in happiness.

Capricorn: *Dec 22-Jan 19* Freeze the boss in you! Allow others to help you this season. Dancing with a friend or family member is a step to prosperity and peace.

Aquarius: *Jan 20-Feb 18* Hello independent one, don't forget others count on you. Giving part of yourself will bring out the peace within. Flowing waters come from smiles that are shared.

Pisces: *Feb 19-Mar 20* Swimming in a straight line is better than swimming in a circle. Your imagination shall create a joyous blow hole.

Aries: *Mar 21-Apr 19* Yes, you always get the job done. You're a bold and courageous one! Hugging is not a crime. Love is knocking at your door, don't run.

Taurus: *April 20-May 20* Stepping slowly is the same as stomping your feet. Learn to glide, freeing up your love.

Gemini: *May 21-Jun 21* Trusting yourself to make decisions makes you hit the bullseye. Love has been looking for you, open the door and allow love to enter.

Cancer: *June 22-Jul 22* You are spot on when it comes to knowing your business. Reach out and aid others in decorating. Spin the truth of trust and hope to others.

Leo: *Jul 23-Aug 22* Hold up. Don't roar at others, we know you got it all together! Allow someone else to take charge! Hunt for the intangible things in life.

Virgo: *Aug 23-Sept 22* It's creativity time — let's shine and embrace that decorative side. Projects can create prosperity during the holidays.

Lies in paradise

TOMMY SPAGHETTI
Groundcover vendor No. 669

Glossary of terms: Hell = Detroit, Paradise = A2, Devil's Weed = marijuana, Oracle = Groundcover News, Oasis = AADL, Craycray = insane, Lies = story, Mboob = girl friend, Scrilla = U.S. currency, Poison = coffee, Drip = time

Why would anyone want to be homeless? The answer to me is two-fold. 1) To experience something different from a normal experience. 2) To create a written article compelling enough to be published in the great Groundcover News. I have submitted several articles, but the only article published recently was an article about home demolition in Hell and a housing activist.

Thus my personal foray into the homeless subculture is predicated on the simple idea that I can be inspired by Barbara Ehrenreich's "Nickled and Dimed," a book depicting the economic prospects of 9-5 living. Barbara adopted a fictitious name and attempted to earn a living in three different cities for a month at a time. A living based on a 40-hour work week. One month as a waitress; one month as a maid; one month at Walmart. The parameter of this current journalistic endeavor is not as formulated as "Nickled and Dimed." My intentions are more personally motivated. Barbara's "Nickled and Dimed" has a much broader extrapolation. Her truth implicates a minimum wage capitalistic society built on trickle-down economics within the scope of high consumerism. My writing aspires to merely entertain the literate plebiscite of Washtenaw County.

This is how it started: A domestic argument quickly transmutes into name-calling, which prompts me to leave my house on foot. Heel toe to the Shame Train 3 km gives me ample drips to review our situation. Normally, I vacate M-boob's house in the summer, finding it easier to flop elsewhere in warm temperatures. This past summer I decided to stay and tough it out, believing that a good relationship is worth fighting for.

September 25, 2025, I left M-boob and the comfortable living arrangement (long overdue for failure). Heel toeing to the Shame Train on Woodward, I board the #46 surreptitiously running into cray cray, a local yokel. She is expert at foraging the woods for edible plants.

"Do you have an ink pen I can borrow?" I ask her. "No I don't," the woman said. "I would like to interview you for the Oracle," I said. "Sure," she replied. A few more questions garner only vague answers, so I give up.

Thankfully our Shame Train enters the Hargrove transit center on State Fair. Rivka: "I'm going shopping." "I'm going downtown," I said, where a flurry of activity awaits. As the Shame Train edges into Grand Circus Park, it becomes evident that there are two sporting events taking place in Hell. A sports fanatic wearing a Lions Jersey informs me that season tickets cost $3,700, proving my theory of NFL Billionaires hiring millionaires to play for thousandaires — that's trickle up economics.

As a writer I know that readers like excitement in their lives, so I can tell you as soon as I got downtown, I purchased a can of Liquid Death, in stark opposition to bottles of H2O.

I approach a plastic cab driver, "Do you have an ink pen I can borrow?" "No, but in a few hours you can find one on the ground." We both dart our eyes to the curb. Crossing Woodward on foot, "Do you have an ink pen I can borrow?" "No, sorry." I ask a cop, a Jehovah's witness, no and no.

The ink pen came from a musician named man. I spied the horn player. "Can I borrow an ink pen?" I asked. "Maybe, if I have one," he said. Rifling through his backpack, he produces an inkpen. "I don't know if it works," he said. "Thanks, man!"

I take three steps back from man, then stop and turn around. Rifling through my pocket, I produce three crumpled up dollars. "Here man, this is to prime your tip basket," I said. Man accepted the donation, citing, "My name is Lawrence."

With this ink pen, I could start this journalistic endeavor to become homeless in paradise.

Day 1: Prompted by the often piqued question, "Where did you sleep last night?" The query speaks loud and clear to me as I traipse through my day. I don't think about WWs, but rather, "What will I eat now?" With an uncounted fist full of scrilla, I heeltoe to the Shame Train in Hell. On to paradise then Ypsilanti where I witnessed part of the Bread and Puppet theater in Riverside Park at Totally Awesome Fest. I arrive just in time for the performance but a compromised seating reveals only a partial performance.

If I am going to be successful at this homeless thing, or unsuccessful at living, I am going to need to become better at managing skills. It has never been my strong suit. I loved math as a child but the discovery of devil's weed prevented me from seeing the benefits of advanced math. I stayed high throughout junior high and high school. Being homeless only requires addition and subtraction. Culling the scrilla from my pocket, I methodically added up the total (in real time) — $5.50. Before I run out of drips I'd like to ink yesterday's lies in my journal. At the 24 hour diner (Stickerhaven) I sit down to scribble away. "Poison," the craycray waitress asks. "Do you have decaf?" "No sorry." I acquiesce. For the purpose of obfuscating the facts and protecting the guilty I have a glossary of terms.

Day 2: Totally disastrous attempt. Lack of sleep and poison I drank combined to make me concerned about my mental and physical health. I feel like death is nearby. Lack of sleep always induces suicidal thoughts. Just seven days in Paradise. I can easily go back to Hell. The Shame Train is just $4. Travelling back to hell will allow me to get my bicycle perhaps and window washing equipment maybe. Also, there is a looming ticket/citation that needs to be paid by the first of the month. My punishment for running a red light on a motorcycle.

Before I left Paradise I spent a couple of days studying Chinese folktales. FAILURE IS A TEACHER STERN, TELLING YOU THERE'S MUCH TO LEARN.

Once upon a time there were three fishes who shared a pond: Plan Ahead, Wait and See and Think Fast. One morning they hear the owner of the property making plans to drain the pond. Immediately Plan Ahead swam to the other side, found an inlet and went to another lake. Early the next morning a big machine came to drain the swamp. Think Fast quickly swam away to the other lake. Wait and See was not so fortunate. Whether I am Think Fast or Wait and See remains to be seen.

community **EVENTS**

HALLOWEEN COSTUME SWAP
Sunday, October 19, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Ann Arbor District Library, downtown branch
Come pick out a new-to-you costume for this year! This is a wonderful chance to save money, clear your closet, and pick out something snazzy for this year from the gently used and clean costumes dropped off at any Library location.

HOLY BONES ARTISAN MARKET
Sunday, October 19, 1-9 p.m.
Ypsi Freighthouse, 100 Market Place, Ypsilanti
They've hand-picked some favorite artists to bring you a curated collection of dark, spooky and beautifully unique goods. It's the perfect time to find new art for your space and connect with the makers behind it all. Admission is free and open to the public.

PILAR'S FOUNDATION FALL INTO ACTION
Sunday, October 19, 4-6:30 p.m.
Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St. Ann Arbor
Fundraising open house with food, live music and silent auction. Uniting our community to benefit immigrant families in need of assistance.
Donation ticket prices: Adults ($50), teens and students with IDs ($35), children under six ($20) Purchase tickets online at pilars-foundation.org or in person at Pilar's Tamales, 2261 W Liberty St. Ann Arbor.

SPOOKY MARKET AND COMMUNITY HARVEST PARTY
Saturday, October 25, 10 a.m.-1p.m.
Farmers Marketplace, 16 S Washington, Ypsilanti
Come dressed in your costume, enjoy plenty of candy, pumpkin painting, kids games! Directly after the market will be a Community Harvest Party (1-4.p.m). Enjoy music, pumpkin carving, a donut eating contest, and face painting. Bring a dish to share!

YPSIWRITES OPEN MIC NIGHT
Monday, October 20, 7-9 p.m.
Corner Brewery, 720 Norris St. Ypsi
Writers are invited to share their work, in whatever stage it is in currently, with supportive YpsiWrites and Ypsi Pride communities.

PUBLIC WORKS AND SOLID WASTE OPEN HOUSE
Sat., October 25, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Public Works Unit, 4251 Stone School Road, Ann Arbor
A free, family-friendly event exploring the world of public works and solid waste. Enjoy hands-on activities to learn about utility infrastructure, city forestry, street maintenance, solid waste, recyling and compost programs; such as touching City trucks, fixing a water main break, painting a plow, and more!

ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW
Saturday, October 25, 9:30 p.m.
Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St. Ann Arbor
Film screening featuring a live shadowcast by The Leather Medusas!

HAUNTED HISTORIES
Wed, Oct 29, 2025 6:30 - 9 p.m.
William L. Clements Library, 909 South University Avenue, Ann Arbor,
Join the Clements Library for a spooktacular open-house event. Throughout the evening, immerse yourself in a 19th-century masquerade party to try to solve a murder mystery while enjoying a variety of activities from the 1800s. Earn prizes for costumes and for solving the mystery. At 6:30, 7:30, and 8:30, SMTD student Sarah Hartmus will perform a dramatic reading of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat." There is limited space for the performance, so register now to reserve your spot at LP.CONSTANTCONTACTPAGES.COM/EV/REG/QC3JSGZ

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ANNUAL OPEN MIC
Friday, November 21, 6-8 p.m.
Makeshift Gallery, 407 E. Liberty St. Ann Arbor
Join us this November in honoring Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week our annual open mic event! Come listen to community members share writing, poetry and stories from the street.

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Beware of greedy goblins

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover writer

Beware of greedy goblins
They will rob you for your goods
They are worse than thugs and hoods
Beware of greedy goblins
They are always up to no good
Beware of greedy goblins
They smile at you
While never having intentions to do good
Beware of greedy goblins
They will snatch your bag every chance they get
But don't worry about the greedy goblins
At the end they will get what they have coming
Beware of greedy goblins
They will leave hummin' and bummin'

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Online at ypsilibrary.org
Call us at 734-482-4110.

TO GET YOUR LIBRARY CARD:
1) Fill out the easy online form at ypsilibrary.org/library-cards.
2) Call 734-482-4110
3) Or stop by any YDL location!

DON'T HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE? We can work with a variety of IDs to get you your card.

Friends of YDL
Holiday Sale
Nov. 22 | 11am-5pm
Nov. 23 | 1-3pm
YDL-Whittaker

Stop by for great deals on gifts for those hard-to-shop-for loved ones on your holiday list. There will be a half-off sale during the Sunday hours (1-3pm).

FEATURED EVENT
NAME CHANGE CLINIC
Wednesday | Nov. 12 | 6-8pm
YDL-Michigan

Join the U of M OUTreach with Outlaws for a free clinic to assist the LGBTQ+ community with name and gender marker changes and affidavits of parentage. Learn how to legally change your name and gender marker in the state of Michigan. Information on how to update your Social Security, Passport, Driver's License, and Birth Certificate will also be available. Legal volunteers will be on site after the presentation to answer questions and assist with forms.

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

In a first-of-its-kind lawsuit, landlord agrees to accept tenants with housing vouchers

MICHAEL J. STEINBERG
Civil Rights Litigation Initiative

On Oct. 16 the Fair Housing Center presented Megan Morse an award for winning the first lawsuit to enforce the Ann Arbor ordinance barring source-of-income discrimination in housing.

In April, a Washtenaw County judge approved a settlement agreement in Ms. Morse's lawsuit alleging that an Ann Arbor landlord refused to rent to people who used government housing vouchers. Ms. Morse was represented by the Civil Rights Litigation Initiative at the University of Michigan Law School.

"I was born in Ann Arbor and I love the city, but my epilepsy and other disabilities make it impossible for me to earn enough money to pay Ann Arbor rent. I was heartbroken and humiliated when a landlord refused to honor my housing voucher and rejected me," said Ms. Morse. "This lawsuit wasn't just for me, it was for everyone in the community. Living with a disability shouldn't stop people from having a home in Ann Arbor."

Morse has several disabilities and relies on Social Security and Housing Choice Vouchers to pay rent. Three years ago, she wanted to move back to Ann Arbor to be close to her daughter and the University of Michigan Hospital, where she participates in studies to develop treatments for epilepsy. When the Ann Arbor Housing Commission granted Morse a housing voucher to pay rent in Ann Arbor, she inquired about renting at several Ann Arbor apartment communities, which are owned and managed by the Wilson White Company. A Wilson White representative told both Morse and a tester from the Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan that the company did not accept housing choice vouchers because they required the landlord to contract with third-party vendors.

Ann Arbor's Non-Discrimination Ordinance makes it illegal to discriminate against tenants based on the source of their income and requires landlords to accept housing choice vouchers as proof of income in their tenant screening process. Because housing choice vouchers are paid directly to landlords by the Ann Arbor Housing Commission, there is little risk of tenants failing to pay their rent. In December 2024, the Michigan legislature passed a statewide law that is similar to the Ann Arbor ordinance. In the litigation, Wilson White argued that it did not have to accept vouchers because it did not want to enter into a contract with the government, which would require additional inspections of the apartment.

"Housing choice vouchers are meant to level the playing field for low-income families," said Pam Kisch, Director of the Fair Housing Center. "Ann Arbor can be a great place to live with excellent schools, job opportunities, public transportation, parks and cultural opportunities. It's also very expensive and we shouldn't add more barriers to living here than already exist."

Under the order signed by the court, Wilson White will:

- Accept Housing Choice Vouchers as a valid source of income for rental applicants,
- Provide training to its staff on the rights of prospective and current tenants who use Housing Choice Vouchers, and
- Clarify its rental applications to explicitly state its acceptance of vouchers as a source of other income.

Attorneys' fees and damages were agreed to in an out-of-court settlement, which is confidential.

"This groundbreaking settlement is a step toward ensuring all low-income people have equal access to Ann Arbor housing, regardless of their source of income," said Alex Jackman, a student attorney with the Civil Rights Litigation Initiative. "Discrimination against housing voucher holders is not only illegal, but it has consequences."

On Oct. 16, Morse received the Mark Mitshkun Board of Directors Award at the Fair Housing Center's Annual Breakfast.

If you think you have experienced housing discrimination, call 1-877-979-FAIR to discuss your situation and/or file a complaint. Information provided about allegations or complaints of housing discrimination will be kept confidential. The Fair Housing Center will not report undocumented immigrants to law enforcement.

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LEARN MORE about programs funded by the community mental health and public safety preservation millage.

New research shows cash for moms and babies improves health, stabilizes families, and saves millions

U-M POVERTY SOLUTIONS

Two new studies reveal that Rx Kids — America's first community-wide prenatal and infant cash program — is transforming health and economic outcomes for families. The findings, published in the American Journal of Public Health and released by the Social Science Research Network, offer compelling evidence of the impact of unconditional cash support for families during pregnancy and infancy — a critical window for child development and maternal and infant health.

Significant improvements in birth outcomes

In new research preprinted in SSRN, researchers from Michigan State University and the University of Michigan analyzed over 450,000 births across the state and found that Rx Kids led to healthier babies with dramatic improvements in birth outcomes in Flint, a city where 59% of children live in poverty — more than triple the national average.

The population-wide study revealed that following the launch of Rx Kids in 2024, Flint saw an 18% drop in preterm births and a 27% reduction in low birthweight, when compared to the previous year and similar Michigan cities. These improvements resulted in approximately 29% reduction in NICU admissions, preventing nearly 60 costly hospitalizations annually and generating an estimated $6.2 million in healthcare savings. These healthier outcomes were linked to behavioral changes during pregnancy, including reduced smoking and increased prenatal care.

Families gain financial stability, improve mental health

A second study published in the American Journal of Public Health, analyzing survey data from more than 1,000 mothers from Flint and surrounding areas, shows that Rx Kids nearly eliminated evictions with a 91% decrease, reduced rent and mortgage debt by over $1,000 on average, and improved nutritional access. Mental health outcomes also improved, with postpartum depression screenings dropping by 14 percentage points. Mothers reported feeling more loved, respected, and hopeful — indicators of enhanced wellbeing. Trust in government increased as well, suggesting that Rx Kids is helping to rebuild the social contract for families.

A proven model for supporting families

"These are not just numbers. These are babies who didn't need intensive care. These are moms who did not suffer from postpartum depression," said Dr. Mona Hanna, director of Rx Kids and associate dean of public health at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. "We've long known that poverty is a public health crisis. This research proves that Rx Kids is a powerful prescription."

Rx Kids recipients in Flint celebrating their child's first birthday.

The findings indicate that the implementation of Rx Kids has been successful in improving maternal and infant health, strengthening family financial security and improving maternal mental health and wellbeing.

"This isn't a pilot. It's a blueprint," said Luke Shaefer, Rx Kids co-director, professor of public policy, and director of Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan, "We're showing that communities can scale unconditional support, reach nearly every family, and deliver measurable results — healthier babies, stronger mental health and economic stability."

Rx Kids was designed to address the economic shock that accompanies childbirth—when income often drops and expenses surge. At the same time, this period marks a critical window for child development, with conditions in utero and early infancy shaping lifelong health and productivity. The program provides universal and unconditional support of $1,500 during pregnancy and $500 per month for babies for 6-12 months.

Launched in Flint, Michigan in January 2024, the program has expanded to eleven communities across Michigan, reaching over 3,400 families with more than $14.5 million in cash prescriptions.

Rx Kids is a program of the Michigan State University Pediatric Public Health Initiative, in collaboration with Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan, administered by GiveDirectly.

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Fed-Up Ministries Director appears on the Kelly Clarkson Show and wins major grant

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Pilot Pen G2 Vice President, Pastor Anna and Kelly Clarkson pictured left to right.

Everybody has seen the Fed-Up Ministries food truck around town at some point, and if not, you will soon. FedUp Ministries, a Southeast Michigan-based organization focused on addressing food insecurity and homelessness, has been feeding low-income and homeless people from Ypsilanti to Ann Arbor for years. They not only provide food to sustain life but also food for thought and spiritual growth while providing employment and volunteering opportunities in our community. The ministry has already provided over 75,000 meals and 10,000 hygiene services (shower and laundry) to clients, demonstrating their profound community impact and commitment to serving those in need.

FedUp Ministries was featured on The Kelly Clarkson Show, a daytime variety talk show, on June 4, 2025. The show surprised the ministry's director, Pastor Anna Taylor-McCants, with a $100,000 Pilot Pen G2 Overachievers Grant. The grant recognizes individuals who go above and beyond to make a positive impact in their community. The grant will help FedUp Ministries build a permanent hub with a commercial kitchen to expand their work providing meals and services to those in need.

I asked Pastor Anna how her organization got on the show and won the grand prize of $100,000. Last summer Fed-Up Ministries' board president Sarah Tears texted Pastor Anna and fellow board member Tosha Lee about the overachiever award on the Kelly Clarkson Show and suggested nominating Pastor Anna. Lee and Pastor Anna's daughter Laynee started documenting why Pastor Anna should win the award. The proposal had to be handwritten, so they decided to let Laynee write from her perspective and in her own hand why her mother should be awarded this grand prize.

Pastor Anna appeared on the show as a finalist, not knowing she had won. Clarkson greeted her by calling her "a rad human — you're so incredible." During the segment, Pastor Anna describes what FedUp has done, and what it hopes to do with the award. When the Pilot Pen G2 vice president and Clarkson informed her she was the winner and handd her the symbolic large check, the indescribable look on Pastor Anna's face said it all.

Fed-Up is currently serving in a mobile capacity, providing prepared hot meals, showers, laundry services and more. But the grant will enable them to explore a land purchase and construction of a dedicated facility to meet the needs of the ministry and the communities they serve.

Fed-Up Ministries' schedule of program services

Tuesdays: Food truck at the Ypsilanti District Library at 1:30-2:30 pm. Food Truck also 1st and 4th Tuesdays 5 - 6:30 p.m. at the Peace Hub,1515 South Harris Road.

Wednesdays: Food truck 12-1 p.m. at Liberty Plaza in downtown Ann Arbor. Note: During the winter months the Wednesday meals will be served at the Daytime Warming Centers in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. Worship service and food truck from 5-7 p.m. at Growing Hope in downtown Ypsilanti.

Showers from 4-7 p.m. on Wednesdays at LEAF, 411 E. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. Note: showers will not be available during the month of November due to winterization.

Note: Care Based Safety crisis response services are also available at all these times and locations.

Like what you read and want to get involved with helping the unhoused in Washtenaw County? There are employment and volunteer opportunities available! Visit their website: fedupminitries.org

Where two rivers converge

J. SCHEIER
Groundcover contributor

Recently while eating lunch outside, I was privy to a conversation between a Groundcover vendor and a nearby encouraging person, telling them they were doing a great job. The vendor seemed unsure, but continued to greet persons with a friendly demeanor and sold one or two papers while I finished lunch. Though several people bought the paper, other pedestrians returned the greeting with a slight and sideways glance, as eye contact seemed too risky or otherwise unwarranted, and maybe a "no thanks" or a smile. Others, no response at all.

The contrast of the pedestrians to the vendor and the encouraging comrade reminds me of the disparity between persons. Is it what is on the outside that separates us from one another? Is it the clothing? The jaunt in step, with quick errands to complete? The conversations with each other? Or if the wheelchair dependent, sitting mostly alone, questioning their own confidence and abilities, was too different? Are we not all like that, at least a bit on the inside? A bit unsure but continuing on?

Risking both connection or disregard, can we not relate? Do we not know of the basic human need to be honored simply because we are human?

Over the weekend, I used the phrase "there but the Grace of God go I" and my 20-something son didn't understand the phrase. So I explained. All my life I have been given family, friends, opportunities, support, mental and physical health, no addictions, no physical ailments. I was born at the right time, in the right place with the right people in order to succeed. This is not something I earned, it was a gift. Hence, on occasion I remind myself to abstain from judgement and assumptions.

The us and the thems. (A best case scenario rather than the "us vs them"). I wonder, why are we so unable to speak with people with different appearances, different lives, different- you name it? And each day, I ponder my impact and what can I do. How do I not sink into the rabbit hole of despair? Do I simply live with blinders on and pretend to not see the discord? Not an option I recommend. Today I read an excerpt from Richard Rohr (a writer and a priest known for his all-inclusive activities — feel free to Google his name) and I paraphrase: we all have tasks and jobs but in the end it is all the same. We are here to "uniquely be divine love in a way that no one else can or will."

As a patron of Groundcover News and a former contributor to Streetwise in Chicago, I bought my paper from the vendor. I received an expression of thanks and as usual, I received the vendor's blessing for today's goodness. I am not sure, but it seems that I was given the greater gift that day. I was treated as a full person with eye contact, a smile and a blessing.

May we remember the translation of the Ubuntu proverb, "I am because we are."

Thank you for listening.

Groundcover all-stars celebrate Ginsberg Center grand opening

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

Jim Clark, Rose Strickland, "Big Mike" Jones and Glen Page rep Groundcover at the newly renovated Ginsberg Center.

It was September 26, 2025, and I was standing in the yard of 1024 Hill St. in Ann Arbor, which is the home of the newly remodeled building called the Edward Ginsberg Center. I was there for the Center's grand reopening, with Groundcover News all-stars Glen Page, Mama Rose Strickland and Big Mike Jones. It was a warm fall afternoon on U-M's campus. The frat house next door was pumping deep, throbbing house music in the background ("Dance" by Chris Stussy). The yard was abuzz with conversation between college students, professors, university big shots and community members.

Groundcover News was located in the "community partners" section side by side with Washtenaw Housing Alliance and Avalon Housing. United Way was there too, along with two community support organizations from Detroit. We were all talking excitedly about our causes and projects, and the atmosphere was hopeful and confident.

It was my first time at the Ginsberg Center so I asked Jessica Kane, the Academic Partnerships Manager, to educate me about it. She explained, "It connects U-M students with organizations outside of the university. It is a community networking system that U-M supplies or sponsors, allowing students to get out into the real world and do real-life things." Kane said. "The university is so big and so powerful that individuals get overlooked. So the Ginsberg Center also mediates between U-M and the general community."

"Who is Edward Ginsberg?" I asked.

Jessica replied, "Phil and Inger Ginsberg are our donors, but they didn't want to name the building after themselves. So they named it the Edward Ginsberg Center to honor Phil's father, who was a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School.

"The Ginsbergs came to the university looking to endow a scholarship. While they were on campus, a faculty member suggested that they talk to some students about the Center for Community Service and Learning. The students had been participants in projects such as community peer facilitation, alternative support groups and leadership projects. The center got 600 students to spend spring break doing service work instead of going to the beach.

"Phil and Inger decided that it was in line with the values their family had grown up with and continued to find value in. So when we say that they're philanthropists, that was their act of philanthropy — this center. And that's because they saw the value of community engagement and getting students out to have real-world experiences. When they want to change the world, we show them the steps to do that."

Amanda Healy is the Assistant Director for Community Partnerships.

"What do you do?" I asked Amanda.

"My role is to help oversee our relationships with our network of community partners," she replied. "U-M is a really big place, and often community partners might have a great connection to one faculty member or one program, but if that program ends or the faculty member moves on, it's hard to get reconnected to the university.

"We're hyper-local in focus. We find folks at U-M who are eager to put their research and knowledge to use in the community. We want to be a central doorway to social sector organizations in Southeast Michigan, especially Washtenaw County. So if you're looking for help recruiting students, help with evaluation or assessment, or a partner on research, we can help you find folks on campus who are interested in that. Also, we pair students with community partners they want to learn from," Healy said.

The Ginsberg family endowed the center as a way to commemorate Edward's commitment to service. Two years ago, a $10 million gift was made to build the new building. They moved in a month ago.

"We are really excited about it," Healy said. "We'll be hosting a documentary screening of 'A Letter from the West Side,' a documentary that was made about the history of housing in Ann Arbor. We also put out postcards asking the community what they would like to see happen here."

The Edward Ginsberg Center is an asset to the community because it puts the massive resources of U-M in the hands of people who are on the ground doing front-line work. Ann Arbor has been a mecca for social justice activists for generations. The Ginsbergs' gift will ensure their work goes on to make an impact.

As the grand opening event wound down, I reflected on the value of the Ginsberg Center to the local community. For Groundcover News, the Center is a doorway to expanding our engagement with the U-M campus. Amanda shared that the Center advertises Groundcover News in a newsletter that goes out to the students. The Groundcover all-star team as well as several other vendors have been vying for spots around campus. Given the mission of the Ginsberg Center, Groundcover News can be a huge connection between the student body and the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti community.

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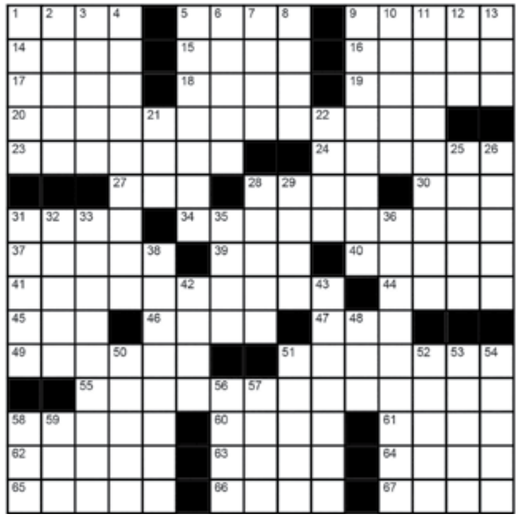

ACROSS
1. MRI or PET
5. Lion's pride
9. PayPal funds
14. Gas station name
15. "Ah, me!"
16. Nearly eradicated disease, thanks to a vaccine
17. Bearing
18. "Buona ___" (Italian greeting)
19. Marsh
20. Person in possession of their place of residence
23. Clogs or mocs
24. Dad, slangily
27. "Gimme ___!" (start of an Iowa State cheer)
28. Narc's find, perhaps
30. Drone, e.g.
31. Grumble
34. Artillerymen
37. Tamil director and activist ___ Sultan
39. Amniotic ___
40. Divided
41. Medium on which libraries preserve old documents
44. Brews
45. Tokyo, formerly
46. Good, long bath
47. "___ rang?"
49. Info-gathering reporter
51. Contemplate
55. Like some winds
58. Kind of dog
60. BBs, e.g.
61. Excursion
62. Large-headed match
63. One of several on a fancy wedding cake
64. Dial ___
65. Game of strategy
66. Sea eagle
67. Units of work

DOWN
1. Tropical palms
2. Pub ___
3. Grape seeds
4. It's often ruled
5. ___ lodge
6. "Smart" ones
7. Bust maker
8. Biblical birthright seller
9. Frat house letters
10. Intimidated
11. Danger warning
12. ___ card (cell phone necessity)
13. Bounce
21. Howard of "Happy Days"
22. Game on horseback
25. Cliffside dwelling
26. Crows' homes
28. Natural talent
29. Foot part
31. Beast of burden
32. Chemical compound
33. Identify
35. ___ Minor
36. Shoulder decoration
38. Prayer beads
42. Source
43. Blight
48. Frequently, poetically
50. Double agents
51. Japanese noodle dish
52. Trial's partner
53. Static ___
54. Varieties
56. Detest
57. Turkish title
58. Ozone enemy (Abbr.)
59. "Come again?"

SPOOKY WORD SEARCH *by Emeri Jade Bey*

Y	N	S	C	A	R	E	C	R	O	W	A	S	I
H	U	E	A	C	M	J	A	B	Y	N	S	O	O
A	N	C	A	W	P	C	K	E	O	E	E	S	L
Y	Y	D	N	A	C	E	R	A	M	O	M	S	E
R	U	Y	R	D	E	A	B	U	C	C	K	A	A
I	E	T	T	O	K	N	T	A	N	O	O	S	V
D	Y	H	C	E	N	S	L	S	L	L	R	P	E
E	O	S	A	N	O	C	A	S	E	K	O	U	S
N	V	C	R	C	O	H	P	S	N	J	K	M	V
C	L	A	N	R	Y	O	P	R	N	A	S	P	K
M	O	V	I	E	S	O	L	O	A	C	E	K	S
K	S	K	V	T	S	L	E	E	L	K	I	I	K
I	E	T	A	S	I	E	S	M	F	E	A	N	B
O	C	A	L	A	L	A	N	C	C	T	E	S	E

COSTUMES
LEAVES
HAYRIDE
JACKET
FLANNEL
SCHOOL
APPLES
SCARECROW
BOOKS
PARTY
RAKE
MOVIES
PUMPKINS
CARNIVAL
CANDY

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Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

2		6		8				
7		9	4		2			
5	4				1			6
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Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *October 3, 2025 edition*

3	9	1	4	5	7	6	8	2
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Many still street homeless in DC following federal and local encampment closures

ANNEMARIE CUCCIA, MADI KOESLER, FRANZISKA WILD, MACKENZIE KONJOYAN AND KATHERINE WILKISON
Street Sense Media

Three weeks into the U.S. federal government's crackdown on visible homelessness and crime in DC, an impromptu count of people experiencing homelessness found that hundreds of people are still living outside in the District.

Combined local and federal efforts claimed to have closed at least 50 encampments in August, according to the White House, although Street Sense has only confirmed 24 closures since the surge began on August 11. The White House has not provided a list of closed encampments or responded to questions about why it could not provide such a list.

But even as President Donald Trump claimed victory for his efforts, a census of people sleeping outside conducted by the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) suggests that unsheltered homelessness in the city did not meaningfully decrease due to the encampment closures, which advocates argue do more to move people around than to move them into housing.

The federal crackdown decreased the number of visible encampments in the District. The count found 54 tents across the city, compared to 107 at the end of July. The human impact has also been clear. People living both at encampments closed by law enforcement and the city's encampment team have scattered, often losing possessions and community in the process. Some rough sleepers (people who sleep outside but not in a tent) have made it a point to avoid law enforcement.

But it is harder to tell if the crackdown has impacted the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness overall. While about 80 new people went into shelter in August, according to the city, at least 764 were still sleeping outside each night, according to the census. This is just 30 people fewer than the annual Point-in-Time (PIT) Count found were sleeping outside in January, although the city cautions against directly comparing the two numbers due to differing methodologies. These numbers do not include people who are homeless but sleeping in shelters; the January PIT Count recorded a total of over 5,100 people experiencing homelessness in the District.

Meanwhile, the city has scheduled several encampment closures through September, including at encampments that have not been closed recently. The city has closed at least 16 encampments in the last two weeks. While this is an uptick in local encampment closures compared to the summer, it is not unprecedented, as the city averaged three to four encampment closures a week as recently as this spring.

"We have a relatively small encampment problem in DC," Mayor Muriel Bowser said at a August 27 update on the federal crackdown. "However, it is highly visible."

The new state of homelessness in DC

Shelters, across state lines, friends' couches — where have people gone since Trump threatened the widespread removal of people experiencing homelessness in the district?

Surveys by Street Sense confirmed that while some people impacted by encampment closures are considering shelter, most stayed outside, either in new spots or without tents. A few crossed state lines into Virginia or Maryland. With the help of mutual aid groups, some residents in special circumstances temporarily moved into hotel rooms. But the question of where people are going is still heavy on the shoulders of DC's unhoused population and outreach workers.

"There has been a significant disruption in the lives of people who live unsheltered," Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Wayne Turnage said ahead of the unsheltered count.

When encampments are closed, people move, and if they do not have reliable phone service or lose their phone in the closure, they can lose touch with outreach workers. Andy Wassenich, director of policy at local outreach and housing nonprofit Miriam's Kitchen, said that his team has lost contact with at least 25 people since the takeover began.

Christine Hong, chief of services to end and prevent homelessness at the Department of Human Services in Montgomery County, Maryland, said that the county has been monitoring closely the data that it receives from street outreach and emergency shelters since the White House announced the federal surge. So far, the county has not seen a significant influx of new people, Hong said. But anecdotally, outreach workers and county residents are seeing "new faces," including

Surveys by Street Sense confirmed that while some people impacted by encampment closures are considering shelter, most stayed outside, either in new spots or without tents. *Photo credit: Madi Koesler*

people who will not share their names or where they are from, which could indicate that they have recently moved from the District.

"Whenever you clear encampments and the residents do not accept the offer of shelter that you make, they will tend to scatter, so that creates difficulty for our outreach team to relocate and continue the offer of homeless services," Turnage said, explaining that the homeless census was conducted to ensure that the city could better provide outreach services to people experiencing homelessness.

The census somewhat mirrored the annual PIT Count, conducted every January, and attempted to determine where people were sleeping outside the night of August 28, following the mass clearings.

During the census, DHS volunteers and outreach providers walked every block of the city between roughly 9 p.m. and 1 a.m. to count people whom they assumed to be experiencing homelessness. Counters did not individually survey people, meaning there is no confirmation that everyone counted is experiencing homelessness. Instead, volunteers cross-referenced recent data from outreach workers about where people often slept.

Because of the difference in methodology, the city cautioned against comparing this census to PIT Count data, although it is the most recent public data on unsheltered homelessness in the city. The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness' PIT Count data reported 798 people sleeping outside in 2025, 900 in 2024, and 825 in 2023, just slightly above the 764 people found in August. The PIT itself is largely understood to be an undercount.

The census was the city's idea, according to Turnage, and as of the night of the count, there had been no discussion of sharing results with the federal government.

As winter approaches, the city plans to use data from this count to increase shelter beds, officials said. The city opened 100 new low-barrier shelter beds in early August. DC is working actively to increase homelessness services capacity by at least 300 more beds, Bowser announced in a press conference the same week of the census. This includes 190 beds at the new noncongregate facility on E Street set to open in September.

"We don't expect that we're going to have homeless encampments, and we are going to work to make sure people can come into shelter," Bowser said at the conference on August 27, ahead of the count.

More beds might sound like an ideal solution to move people inside, but many unsheltered people in DC prefer their encampments to the city's shelters. Encampment residents feel that they have more privacy and autonomy when living outside or in tents than in shelters. Many shelters in the District have curfews, bag limits, and security checks. They also prohibit pets and

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are, for the most part, single gender, meaning that couples and adult families may have to split up.

People living outside emphasize that shelters are not a home. Encampments can provide a sense of community and more freedom than shelters. Having a space that is all their own, even though it is outside, provides a sense of privacy and ownership that the communal style of shelter living can strip away, even as it offers more protection from the elements.

"You have to cure the problem, not put a band-aid on the problem," said one person experiencing homelessness, who asked to remain anonymous to protect their safety while living outside.

City-driven encampment closures

Encampment closures during the first week of the crackdown were mired in confusion, as law enforcement led many closures, and it seemed that the city's social service agencies and encampment team were not always aware of closures beforehand.

"When we first got started, it was a little difficult to try to figure out how it would work," Turnage said on the night of the count.

But now, he said, the federal and local teams have worked out a protocol. The federal government can inform DC about sites that it finds and ask to get a team there to close the site.

According to a White House official, MPD patrol units are also working to locate and close encampments. The White House is reporting a much higher number of encampments closed than the city, suggesting that there have been several closures the city did not attend, or still does not have information about.

"President Trump is cleaning up DC to make it safe for all residents and visitors while ensuring homeless individuals aren't out on the streets putting themselves at risk or posing a risk to others. Homeless people will have the opportunity to be taken to a homeless shelter or receive addiction and mental health services," Abigail Jackson, a White House spokesperson, wrote in response to questions about encampment closures.

Street Sense followed up, asking how the White House is able to ensure that people are offered shelter or treatment if the relevant DC agencies are not aware of a closure, and requested a list of sites closed by law enforcement at the behest of the White House without involvement from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS). White House officials did not provide specific responses to either question.

Ahead of an encampment closure on September 3, Coco packed up her cart and moved from outside the Columbia Road Truist to a small park a couple of blocks away. Before DMHHS threw away her unwanted belongings, outreach workers repeatedly offered Coco bridge housing at the Aston.

Over the two years in which Coco lived outside in the Adams Morgan neighborhood, they said that she had tried shelters and bridge housing but felt that they took away her freedom. As a voucher holder, Coco is holding out for a space she can feel is her own without a curfew or roommates. "I feel like I'm outside unjustly," she said. "People like me [that] have a voucher – get me housed!"

Uncertainty around arrests

So far, Street Sense has not been able to confirm any arrests of people experiencing homelessness using the two statutes that the White House has said that MPD would potentially enforce to fine or jail people for camping or sleeping outside. These laws include DC Code 22-1307, which makes it illegal to block a sidewalk and could, in theory, be used to arrest someone for sleeping outside, as well as DC Municipal Regulation 24-100, which bans camping in D.C.

Throughout the takeover, two people have been arrested at encampment clearings, but on the charge of assaulting an officer, according to a White House official. The city encampment team was not present for either arrest. The White House did not provide Street Sense with any specifics about the arrests, meaning that reporters could not independently verify their circumstances.

But a number of people experiencing homelessness have been arrested, mostly on minor charges such as having open containers of alcohol and fare evasion. These arrests can be disruptive and traumatizing for people. They have also been upsetting for surrounding community members.

A recent widely shared video depicts the arrest of an elderly woman experiencing homelessness. In the video, as nearly a dozen federal agents and local officers walk the handcuffed woman to a police cruiser, neighbors can be heard screaming expletives in anger at the officers. "Yes, we know her, she sits here for years," one bystander yells, her voice rising in anger. "The f—ing FBI is here."

Miguel Trindade Deramo, an Advisory Neighborhood commissioner from a nearby neighborhood, took a video and posted it on social media platform X. He described the experience as upsetting. "It's so disproportionate, it really made me wonder what was the precipitating event," he told Street Sense. "It's one thing for MPD to do it, another thing for federal agents."

Using the time and location of the arrest, Street Sense confirmed via arrest reports that the woman was arrested for having an open container of alcohol while she sat on a nearby

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Buttermilk biscuits

BEN FOSTER
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
2 cups flour
2 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
7 Tbsp unsalted butter*
¾ cup buttermilk*
Little bit of extra buttermilk for brushing tops of biscuits
*Needs to sit in the freezer for 30 minutes.

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Cut the butter into thin slices and place them and the buttermilk in the freezer for at least 30 minutes. Use a box grater for easy butter slicing!

Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl.

Add the butter into the dry mix, breaking it apart into little bits with your fingers until you have a crumbly texture. Make a well in the center of the mix and add buttermilk. Stir briefly until combined, don't over mix. You won't have a dough yet so don't worry about the consistency being too crumbly. Turn the mixture onto a floured surface.

Use your hands to form a rectangle out of the mixture. Fold into thirds and press back into a rectangle a little less than an inch thick. Each time, incorporate the stray crumbs back into the dough before folding over.

Use a rolling pin to roll the dough out to about ½ inch thick. Use a biscuit cutter or jar lid to cut out biscuits (with about a two inch diameter) out of the dough. Combine and roll out the scraps and continue cutting out biscuits.

Put biscuits on a greased baking sheet, indent each in the center with your thumb, and brush with the extra buttermilk. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.

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stoop.

Though the official police takeover expires on September 10, Bowser signed an executive order requiring indefinite cooperation between the city and federal law enforcement. Outreach workers and people experiencing homelessness are still waiting to see the long-term impacts of the crackdown.

One man, who used to live in Washington Circle until he was displaced during the first set of encampment clearings carried out by law enforcement, said that he wanted people to know that homelessness does not make someone a criminal.

"Just 'cause you're homeless, doesn't mean you're a drug addict," the man, who declined to give his name, said. He added that he has a job, pays child support, and makes too much to qualify for food stamps, but does not make enough to pay rent. "We got people out here actually trying to do better for themselves."

Courtesy of Street Sense Media / INSP.ngo

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